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# AMERICA IN THE THIRD WORLD:

STUDY OF THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATIONS



94-16917



SSA



**AMERICA IN THE THIRD WORLD:  
STRATEGIC ALTERNATIVES  
AND MILITARY IMPLICATIONS**

**Steven Metz**

**May 20, 1994**

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Comments pertaining to this report are invited and should be forwarded to: Director, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050. Comments also may be conveyed directly to the author by calling commercial (717) 245-3822 or DSN 242-3822.

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## FOREWORD

The U.S. Government is very much aware of the current crises afflicting the Third World. All of these severe problems need to be effectively addressed through informed policy decisions. Because of this mandate, policymakers, defense professionals, and strategic thinkers are debating questions about the Third World as they strive to develop appropriate American strategies for the future.

In this study, the author examines the problems of the Third World and the debates that exist regarding the most effective U.S. response to these problems. He has concluded that the Third World is undergoing such significant change that most of the basic assumptions undergirding past and current U.S. policy are no longer viable. He urges a fundamental and radical revision of our national strategy toward the Third World, and recommends a future strategy that would see far more selective and discrete involvement in these staggering problems.

If our national leaders accept his theories concerning failed states, they will be less inclined to attempt active intervention on a scale that approximates the current level of U.S. involvement. The United States will, in effect, disengage from large segments of the Third World, with only carefully selected humanitarian or ecological relief operations being executed. Such a strategy would, of course, have profound implications for the U.S. military and would require adjustments in force structure and operational directives concerning the application of military power in pursuit of national interests.

During times of strategic transition, "muddling through" is not enough: basic concepts must be rigorously examined and debated. The Strategic Studies Institute sees this study as a means of supporting the process of developing a coherent post-cold war strategy for dealing with the Third World as it will be, not as it was.



JOHN W. MOUNTCASTLE  
Colonel, U.S. Army  
Director, Strategic Studies Institute

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR**

**STEVEN METZ** is Associate Research Professor of National Security Affairs at the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College. His specialties are transregional security issues and military operations other than war. Dr. Metz has taught at the Air War College, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and several universities. He holds a B.A. and M.A. in international studies from the University of South Carolina, and a Ph.D. in political science from the Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Metz is the author of many monographs and articles on world politics, military strategy, and national security policy.

## **SUMMARY**

Since the end of the cold war, the Third World has moved from the periphery to the center of American national security strategy. As the basic assumptions of past strategy become obsolete, debate rages over future U.S. strategy in the Third World. The outcome of this will have immense implications for the military.

### **Debate in Three Dimensions.**

The current debate over U.S. strategy in the Third World takes three dimensions:

- Debate over the *extent* of American involvement in the Third World (isolationism versus engagement);
- Debate over the *basic philosophy* of American engagement (idealism versus realism); and
- Debate over the *form* of American engagement (unilateralism versus multilateralism).

Future strategy will be shaped by the outcome of these debates.

### **The Changing Face of Security.**

To make sense, future American strategy must be based on trends in the Third World. Current trends point toward a grim future characterized by:

- A reversal of the recent trend toward democracy;
- Instability, ungovernability, and, in some cases, anarchy;
- Economic stagnation and ecological decay;
- Primalism; and,



- The increasing importance of new security threats and new types of forces to confront them.

The Third World itself will split into a "third tier" of violent, ungovernable regions and a "second tier" which faces severe security problems but will be able to preserve some degree of stability. In the third tier, the extreme of ungovernability will be "failed states" with a total breakdown of order and civil administration, but many other states will see ungovernability ebb and flow, with parts of their territory permanently beyond government control.

### **A Strategy for the Future.**

To meet the challenges of this new security environment, U.S. strategy for the Third World must be modified. A primary feature should be substantial disengagement, especially from the volatile third tier. We should promote human rights, but with modest expectations. Ecological sanity will also become an important objective. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction will affect nearly all strategic decisions.

### **Military Implications.**

Over the next 10 years, the chance of major American involvement in sustained land warfare in the Third World will drop to near zero. The most likely opponents will be gray area organizations, primal militias, warlord armies, and, for the short term, unstable "backlash states." To meet these future threats, the U.S. military must be able to perform both offensive and defensive missions. Offensive missions will include:

- Humanitarian and ecological relief and intervention;
- Strikes to punish enemies or enforce international actions; and,
- Traditional special operations.

Defense missions will include:

- Immigration control;

- Counter-terrorism;
- Force protection during ecological and humanitarian missions; and,
- Strategic defense against weapons of mass destruction.

The dominant branches of the future U.S. Army will be Special Operations Forces, Military Police, Military Intelligence, Aviation, and Air Defense Artillery.

### **Conclusions.**

For the next decade, the Third World security situation is likely to undergo phased transition. Initially nation-states will still remain the most important political units and backlash states with large conventional militaries will pose the greatest danger. As a result, the conventionally-configured U.S. military will remain important. Eventually the Third World will enter a new phase. The third tier will disintegrate into ungovernability while nation-states and conventional militaries decline in significance. At that point, the primary forms of security forces will be militias, private armies, armed corporations. In preparation, U.S. forces should undergo substantial strategic disengagement. When our involvement is necessary for humanitarian and ecological relief, we can only be effective if we have undertaken a radical restructuring of our security forces. This includes not only reorganization and changed emphasis within the military, but also alterations of the fundamental relationship of the U.S. military and the nonmilitary elements of our security and intelligence forces.

# **AMERICA IN THE THIRD WORLD: STRATEGIC ALTERNATIVES AND MILITARY IMPLICATIONS**

## **Introduction.**

With the end of the cold war, the Third World became the centerpiece of American national security strategy. Europe remains important, but the thorniest security issues—U.N. peace operations, Haiti, Somalia, Iraq, North Korea, proliferation—are Third World problems. "Major regional conflicts" in the Third World have become the basic conceptual building block of U.S. military strategy.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, though, the elevation of the Third World from the periphery to the center of U.S. national security strategy has not yet stoked a fundamental reexamination of the way we understand this part of the world. Today we face new problems armed with old ideas.

In a sense, it is difficult to consider the Third World a single entity. Certainly every Third World problem is enmeshed in a web of particulars. In Bosnia, for instance, policymakers must consider a thousand years of ethnic conflict, the legacy of World War II, the sensitivities of friendly Islamic states, and the debate over the future of NATO. Somalia is, perhaps, even more complex. A bewildering pattern of clan relations is blended with the residue of superpower competition and then combined with questions concerning the reconstruction of "failed states" and charges by African-American leaders that the United States historically ignores Africa. The list goes on: every real or potential problem, every conflict, is unique.

Faced with this complexity, it is easy to take an astrategic approach to the Third World, focus on particulars, sink into issue-relativism, and conclude that nothing learned in one region applies to another. But to do so is dangerous. The result is a garbled and incoherent policy unable to garner adequate domestic support. Without losing sight of particulars, the United

**States must approach the diverse parts of the Third World with a workable set of concepts, assumptions, values, techniques, and parameters, all forming the common language used by policymakers and the public to debate alternative approaches to specific issues. We need, in other words, a coherent strategy for the Third World, however broad and general.**

**Today, it is almost banal to note that every dimension of our national security strategy requires rethinking. But as a torrent of global change washed away old strategic assumptions, the Third World was largely ignored. This is understandable: other issues had to be confronted first. But the fact remains that most foreign policy crises since World War II have originated in the Third World.<sup>2</sup> To the extent that our strategy in the Third World has been analyzed at all, policymakers, political leaders, defense professionals, and strategic analysts have assumed that most of our past strategy remains valid. All that is needed is adjustment—perhaps a little disengagement in particular regions, or a diminution of security assistance. Such tweaking of past strategy, however, is inadequate. The pace of change in the Third World is electric, the effect revolutionary. Our strategy must reflect this. What is needed, then, is strategic entrepreneurship to transcend old ideas or, at least, set the stage for transcendence. Future U.S. strategy in the Third World must incorporate emerging concepts such as ecological security, gray area threats, and primalism. For the U.S. military, the implications of such new ideas are immense.**

### **Debate in Three Dimensions.**

**The evolution of American foreign policy and national security strategy has always followed a distinctly dialectical pattern. Debate on key concepts or issues leads to a loose consensus which then shapes day-to-day policy. This consensus determines not only how "in-basket" problems are handled, but what sorts of problems enter the in-basket. At some point, change in the global security environment or in domestic politics undercuts the consensus and sparks new debate. Eventually, a new consensus emerges. Today, the cold war consensus that guided American strategy in the Third World is shaken. Debate is raging in three dimensions, all**

reflecting disagreements with deep roots in our history. The eventual outcome—the new consensus—will form the foundation of our future national security and military strategy.

The first dimension of debate concerns the *extent* of American involvement in the world. The extreme positions are represented by isolationism and globalism. Until the 20th century, the United States followed a form of isolationism based on avoiding the political struggles of the European powers. The rationale for this was both philosophical and practical. Isolationism reflected the perception of American "specialness." We were a representative democracy based on open discussion of political issues and rule by the majority. Traditional statecraft, by contrast, was a game played by aristocratic elites. Its folkways were subterfuge and secrecy, its practice amoral. Beginning at least with Thomas Jefferson, many Americans believed that this moral superiority justified isolationism.<sup>3</sup> Since conflict, according to this argument, invariably settles at the ethical level of the more unscrupulous antagonist, to become involved in European statecraft would embroil us in its Machiavellianism. At the same time, isolationism also had a more practical motive. Taking sides would alienate potential customers for our exports and require increased military spending. This final point was particularly worrisome: to most Americans, large standing armies seemed incompatible with representative democracy.

By the end of the 19th century, the consensus undergirding isolationism was eroding. Economics was the driving force. Facing a serious and sustained economic depression in the 1890s, American business and political leaders concluded that prosperity was contingent on access to overseas markets. Continued isolationism might allow the Europeans to carve the entire world into colonial empires and exclude or greatly curtail American exports. This would pose a danger not only to our economy, but also to our political system. Economic slumps always spawned political radicalism. Toward the end of the 19th century, this took a new, dangerous form as European immigrants brought socialism to the United States. The apparent solution was a more active foreign policy aimed at protecting access to overseas markets. This desire to nurture

American business led us to acquire our own colonial empire and militarily intervene in the Caribbean, Central America, and Asia, thus establishing a tradition that eventually shaped our Third World strategy.

World War I was a major blow to isolationism—a "shove from Mars" in Selig Adler's phrase.<sup>4</sup> The Second World War applied the *coup de grace* and most Americans concluded that only regular and extensive U.S. involvement in great power politics could prevent major conflict. In addition, most Americans believed the United States had a moral destiny to shape global politics.<sup>5</sup> The result was abandonment of isolationism and, eventually, the embrace of global activism. As John Kennedy committed the United States to "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe," Americans assumed an interest in every corner of the world. The Vietnam War and the economic problems of the 1970s tempered globalism, but our strategists continued to find national interests in places like Angola and Afghanistan that 19th century American leaders had probably never heard of.

During the cold war, U.S. foreign and national security policy was never purely isolationist or globalist, but reflected a shifting balance between the two. Today, the appropriate mix is again the subject of debate.<sup>6</sup> For the first time since World War II, isolationism is receiving serious support. In fact, Alan Tonelson argues that debate between internationalists and a new breed of isolationists he calls "minimalists" will dominate the foreign policy agenda during the coming years.<sup>7</sup> Minimalists range from populist politicians such as Ross Perot and Patrick J. Buchanan to foreign policy analysts such as Ted Galen Carpenter.<sup>8</sup> Underlying their thinking is the belief that the Soviet threat forced a degree of insolvency on American strategy as commitments exceeded resources. Today the demise of the Soviet threat allows a diminution of commitments and a return to solvency.<sup>9</sup> One important subcategory of minimalists supports U.S. engagement in Europe and the developed parts of Asia, but sees little rationale for extensive involvement in the Third World. Stephen Van Evera and Benjamin C. Schwarz represent this school.<sup>10</sup> Internationalism is advocated by most of the traditional foreign policy elite,

including President Clinton, most of Congress, and much of the media. In response to Van Evera and other critics of U.S. engagement in the Third World, writers such as Steven David contend that the United States does have serious (if not vital) interests which must be actively promoted.<sup>11</sup> Some analysts believe that the world is moving toward division into great trading blocs, with the European Community destined to dominate Europe and Africa and Japan to control Asia. The future of the United States, they contend, lies with closer political cooperation and economic integration in the Western Hemisphere.<sup>12</sup> Engagement in Latin America, then, is justified, while we should disengage from much of the rest of the Third World. In general, internationalism currently has greater support than minimalism or isolationism. While it might seem that Kennedy-style globalism is dead, Grant Hammond's contention is that "Humanitarian intervention is the Bush-Clinton version of 'paying any price, bearing any burden' in the 1990s."<sup>13</sup> Clearly some new balance must be found between global engagement and disengagement.

The second great debate in American foreign and national security policy concerns the *basic philosophy* undergirding our approach to the world, especially how we define national interests. One alternative is realism. This is the descendent of the sort of conservatism developed by philosophers such as Machiavelli and Hobbes. While there has always been a strain of conservatism in American politics, the realist approach to national security grew out of efforts by political scientist Hans Morgenthau and his followers to apply the wisdom of traditional European statecraft to U.S. foreign policy. This heritage is reflected in the assumptions of political realism. Most basic is the belief that the currency of international politics is power. "Interest defined in terms of power," Morgenthau suggested, "helps political realism find its way through the landscape of international politics."<sup>14</sup> This is immutable. "For better or worse," according to Owen Harries and Michael Lind, "international politics remains essentially power politics..."<sup>15</sup> A coherent strategy matches power and geostrategic interests which include tangible concerns such as access to sea lanes or raw materials and intangible objectives, especially preservation of a balance among the world's great powers.

Realism also assumes that nations have discernable hierarchies of interests. The intensity of an interest determines how much and what kind of national power should be used to protect or promote it.

Because national power is so valuable, it must be husbanded and dispersed frugally. A state should only use it in pursuit of truly important things—a line of reasoning that led Morgenthau to oppose American involvement in Vietnam. This frugality leads realists to accept diversity in the domestic arrangements of states. What should determine U.S. policy toward a nation is its foreign policy and external behavior. Realists also believe statesmen must tolerate some instability. Since power in the international system is dispersed, conflict is inevitable. It can be controlled or managed, but not abolished. The major method of controlling conflict is the balance of power. Maintaining this is an extremely important national interest.

While realists recognize that the Third World has been the source of most instability and conflict in the modern world, they consider it unimportant. The ability of a state to cause damage is proportionate to its power. Great powers can cause great damage and minor powers only minor damage (so long as great powers recognize the systemic insignificance of minor powers and act accordingly). From the perspective of the international system, Third World states have little power, so to place too much emphasis on controlling conflict among them neglects the rule of strategic frugality and wastes valuable power. Furthermore, most Third World conflict cannot be resolved at a reasonable cost. Realists, then, seek to minimize the impact of conflict in the Third World—particularly internal conflict—and conflict between great powers and minor ones on the central balance of power. Unless a Third World state has some special geostrategic significance such as location on a key line of communication, possession of a valuable resource, or the potential to upset the great power balance (perhaps using nuclear weapons), the United States should limit engagement.

Idealists, by contrast, accord the Third World a pivotal position in international security. For them, the primary



currency of world politics is not national power, but fundamental values such as individual liberty, political rights, democracy, and economic freedoms. Where realists see conflict in the international system as inevitable, idealists believe it can be transcended. The roots of idealism, then, are found in the liberal tradition of the Western Enlightenment, especially Immanuel Kant, John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, John Stuart Mill, and, more recently, Woodrow Wilson. Global conflict, according to idealists, arises from the absence or repression of fundamental values; democracies seldom or never make aggressive war. The foreign policy of a state directly mirrors its domestic arrangements, so regimes such as Iraq or North Korea that repress their own people are often externally aggressive as well. The cure is transformation of global politics.

To foster the peaceful resolution of international conflict, idealists favor strengthening international law and organizations. This must be supported by active efforts to promote fundamental rights within states. For idealists, this is not only morally satisfying, but also has practical security benefits. Since conflict—whether between states or within them—is merely a symptom of some deeper problem, idealists believe root causes rather than manifestations must be attacked. Sustainable development, democracy, and institutional arrangements for the protection of basic rights will help ultimately solve conflict. A balance of power may temporarily diminish it, but by leaving root causes intact, makes future recurrences inevitable. U.S. foreign and national security policy must thus promote fundamental rights and the peaceful resolution of conflict. Our relations with a state should be determined by the extent it supports these goals. Unlike realists, idealists reject the notion that cultivating friendly dictators is sometimes a necessary evil. Domestic arrangements, they believe, determine external behavior. This means that a dictatorship can seldom be a peaceful neighbor, and thus undercutting dictators contributes to regional stability.

In his classic study *Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations*, Robert Osgood attempted to reconcile idealism and realism.<sup>16</sup> For future American strategy in the

Third World, the two approaches remain compatible. They share, for example, the belief that Third World conflict is contagious and can spread if not contained (the realist option) or resolved (as idealists prefer). Both usually accept a leadership role for the United States. Even though realists and idealists admit that the United States must work in conjunction with friends and allies, they believe it can, in President Clinton's words, "serve as a fulcrum for change and a pivot point for peace."<sup>17</sup> And, perhaps most important, traditional realism and idealism have both been state-centric, dealing primarily with regimes and seeing security as an international issue. They both, in other words, reflect the past nature of global politics rather than its future.

Despite the wide conceptual gap between idealism and realism, American strategy has always blended them. Most idealist appeals such as Truman's promise "to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation" were, according to Jonathan Clarke, "preceded by a clear-headed analysis of American geopolitical self-interest."<sup>18</sup> In part, this intermingling of opposites was necessary because of the diverse audiences American national security policy must satisfy. Idealism, with its strong moral emphasis, is inherently more appealing to the mass public. Americans want to feel that our policy places us on the side of "good." Foreign policy elites tend more toward realism with its pursuit of interests stripped of moral overtones. The United States is most effective when, as in the Gulf War, our actions combine a clear moral component with rigorous promotion of geostrategic interests. Unfortunately, such issues are scarce.

Over time, the specific blend of idealism and realism in American strategy shifted to reflect world events, domestic politics, and the proclivities of top policymakers. Kennedy, Carter, and Reagan moved toward the idealist end of the spectrum, making freedom or human rights central to their strategies for the Third World. Nixon understood the world through a realist geopolitical lens (but used idealist language to sell detente) and Bush, despite rhetoric about a "new world order," leaned toward realism and a reliance on force.<sup>19</sup> Always, though, it was a matter of blend and balance, shifting

between fairly firm boundaries defining the acceptable limits of realism and idealism in American policy, and building a new consensus as the global security environment changed.

Today, the old consensus defining the limits of realism and idealism has eroded and the debate rages over the philosophical foundation of future American national security strategy. Realism has many articulate advocates among foreign policy analysts and strategic thinkers. It is well represented in influential journals such as *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *Orbis*, and *The Washington Quarterly*, and dominates others such as *The National Interest* and *Global Affairs*.<sup>20</sup> "Neorealism" retains the general assumptions and beliefs of classical cold war realism, but uses economics and, to a lesser extent, historical security relations rather than ideology to prioritize American interests.<sup>21</sup> By contrast, post-cold war idealists argue "the United States should take the lead in promoting the trend toward democracy."<sup>22</sup> Key advocates include Joshua Muravchik and Morton Halperin—a former Clinton nominee for a Defense Department post.<sup>23</sup> Some of the most interesting idealist initiatives come from the bipartisan, semi-official National Endowment for Democracy.<sup>24</sup> This organization represents the institutionalization of idealism in an attempt to counterbalance the realist proclivities of the foreign policy elite.

The Clinton administration leans toward idealism. In an important September 1993 speech, National Security Advisor Anthony Lake stated, "the idea of freedom has universal appeal" and saw "a moment of immense democratic and entrepreneurial opportunity."<sup>25</sup> With classic idealist logic, he suggested, "to the extent democracy and market economics hold sway in other nations, our own nation will be more secure, prosperous and influential, while the broader world will be more humane and peaceful."<sup>26</sup> According to Lake, the successor to containment as America's grand strategy must be "a strategy of enlargement—enlargement of the world's free community of market democracies." But, as always, the administration's idealism was tempered by realism. Lake noted that the United States "must combine our broad goals of fostering democracy and markets with our more traditional geostrategic interests."

In November 1993 testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary of State Warren Christopher appeared even further removed from idealism when, in key Senate testimony, he stressed traditional geostrategic concerns.<sup>27</sup> The administration has also resisted calls to end China's most favored nation trading status as punishment for human rights abuses.<sup>28</sup>

The third dimension of debate over the future of U.S. national security strategy concerns the *form* of our engagement in the world. Unilateralists believe "if you want a job done right, you must do it yourself." To effectively shape the sort of world the United States seeks, they argue, we must act alone. Allies, driven by a different set of national interests, are often more a burden than a help. American foreign and national security policy has long been unilateralist in regions such as the Caribbean and Central America, and multilateralist in regions such as Europe where allies were necessary.

After the cold war, support for multilateralism surged. According to President Bush, "Where in the past many times the heaviest burdens of leadership fell to our nation, we will now see more efforts made to seek consensus and concerted action."<sup>29</sup> This did not connote equality between allies, but a relationship where the United States is the senior partner or chairman. In effect, this was an attempt to use our role in NATO as a global model: there would be consultation, but final authority was to remain in Washington. The ultimate goal was what Patrick E. Tyler labeled "benevolent domination."<sup>30</sup>

Movement toward multilateralism seemed to accelerate during the first six months of the Clinton administration, with the United Nations the center of attention. Advocates of multilateralism, both in the administration and outside it, believed that as the cold war stalemate in the Security Council abated, the U.N. could finally play the active role in conflict resolution envisioned by its founders. Some writers even advocated U.N. conservatorship of "failed states" like Afghanistan or Somalia.<sup>31</sup> Multilateralists were particularly heartened by changing notions of national sovereignty. "We are groping toward arrangements," according to Thomas G. Weiss, "by which egregious aggression, life-threatening

suffering, and human rights abuses become legitimate international concerns more routinely."<sup>32</sup> In fact, the decades-long decline in the rigid notion of national sovereignty that holds that affairs within a state's boundaries are only its concern—a decline sparked by the Holocaust, decolonization, and global opposition to racism and apartheid—is accelerating.<sup>33</sup> Such changes in international attitudes could pave the way for humanitarian intervention.<sup>34</sup> Supporters consider this both morally appealing—a resurgence and repackaging of the 19th century notion of the white man's "civilizing mission" in the Third World—and a practical way to augment American security. Andrew S. Natsios, for instance, argues "Humanitarian intervention applied carefully and with restraint is as much in the self-interest of the United States as geopolitical intervention."<sup>35</sup>

President Clinton and his top advisors initially placed great stress on strengthening the United Nations. During the 1992 election, Clinton called for a U.N. "rapid deployment force...standing guard at the borders of countries threatened by aggression, preventing mass violence against civilian populations, providing relief and combatting terrorism."<sup>36</sup> Madeleine Albright, Clinton's representative to the United Nations, talked of "assertive multilateralism" forming a cornerstone of U.S. policy.<sup>37</sup> Undersecretary of State Peter Tarnoff hailed multilateralism as a way to maintain influence during defense cuts.<sup>38</sup> The administration was especially enthusiastic about more assertive forms of U.N. peacekeeping known as "second generation peace operations."<sup>39</sup> This reflected a sea change in official American attitudes toward the U.N. from the skepticism of the Reagan era. Again, this change began during the Bush presidency when he committed the United States to take multinational peacekeeping more seriously during a speech to the General Assembly.<sup>40</sup>

By the end of 1993, however, the enthusiasm of the Clinton administration, Congress, and the American public for expanded U.N. peacekeeping had waned.<sup>41</sup> More and more, policymakers recognized that rather than stretching scarce defense resources and sharing the burdens of global security, U.N. peace operations could draw us into conflicts we might

otherwise have avoided.<sup>42</sup> As a result, an administration policy paper on peace operations underwent several revisions with increasingly stringent conditions for U.S. involvement.<sup>43</sup> And, Clinton was equally unhappy with the inability of the European nations to stop the war in Bosnia. We wanted the Europeans, as Grant Hammond points out, to do in Bosnia what we refused to do in Haiti.<sup>44</sup> This failure, Clinton believed, challenged the idea that we could play the role of "one among equals" in the resolution of regional conflicts. Although still multilateralist, the Clinton administration entered 1994 much less sanguine about strengthening the United Nations or relying on other forms of cooperation. As with other dimensions of the debate over the American approach to the world, no consensus had yet emerged to give direction to national security policy. Debate still raged in all three dimensions.

### **The Changing Face of Security.**

While the most dramatic changes in the global security environment during the past 5 years took place in Europe, trends in the Third World were equally profound. At first glance, these seem positive. With the Soviet Union and its proxies no longer instigating and arming internal war, Third World conflicts from El Salvador to Mozambique moved toward resolution. Regions like the southern cone of South America that seemed on the verge of war 10 years ago were now dominated by economic integration and cooperation.<sup>45</sup> The overall economic stagnation and debt crises which dominated much of the Third World in the 1980s slackened somewhat in the face of market-oriented reform. This was most pronounced in places like Chile and Mexico, but even Sub-Saharan African nations which implemented strict reform packages suggested by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund reaped economic benefits.<sup>46</sup> Political trends seem equally positive. In many parts of the Third World elected governments replaced dictatorships, leading to talk of a "democratic revolution." And the defeat of Iraq by a global coalition seemed to send a warning to other Third World states bent on traditional cross-border aggression. All of this could suggest a rosy future built on stability, security, and progress.

In reality, the long-term prognosis for the Third World is not promising. A confluence of political, economic, health, ecological, social, and security patterns portend danger, perhaps even disaster. American strategy must carefully assess these trends, project them into the future, and plan accordingly. Such thinking is necessarily based on informed speculation or "best guesses," but is the only way to avoid a reactive, short-sighted strategy.

Politically, the democratic revolution in the Third World has largely run its course. There are few remaining candidates for transformation from authoritarianism to democracy and many reasons to expect a reversal of the democratic revolution.<sup>47</sup> In fact, backsliding—reversion to some form of authoritarianism—is likely as new democracies face a plethora of economic, ecological, and social challenges. In country after country, it is becoming clear that simply holding elections does not build and consolidate a democratic culture.<sup>48</sup> Beleaguered elected leaders, pressed by rising demands, disintegrating security, and stagnant economies, are likely to temporarily or permanently abolish legislatures and postpone elections as in Peru. In some regions, old-fashioned military coups will occur. Others will mimic Italy of the 1920s, Germany of the 1930s, or Argentina of the 1940s as charismatic extremists play on widespread frustrations to turn popularity into political power.

This reversal of the democratic revolution will be the first step in a long-term slide into ungovernability as traditional nation-states prove unable to meet either the tangible or spiritual needs of their subjects.<sup>49</sup> "The nation-state," according to Kenichi Ohmae, "has become an unnatural, even dysfunctional, unit for organizing human activity and managing economic endeavor in a borderless world."<sup>50</sup> President Clinton even noted its growing obsolescence with simultaneous trends toward supranational economic integration and subnational political fragmentation.<sup>51</sup> In its extreme form, ungovernability generates "failed states" characterized by declining or destroyed public order, rising domestic violence, stagnating economies, and deteriorating infrastructure.<sup>52</sup> Afghanistan is, perhaps, typical. There, according to Tim Weiner, "There is no civil law, no government, no economy—only guns and drugs

and anger."<sup>53</sup> Even states with a recent history of stability such as Algeria are tottering toward disintegration.<sup>54</sup> In addition to Afghanistan, the current list of failed states includes Bosnia, Liberia, Mozambique, and Somalia. Potentially, the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa and the periphery of the former Soviet Union will follow.<sup>55</sup> Short of outright chaos, many other Third World states will see ungovernability ebb and flow, with parts of their territory permanently beyond government control.

All of the traditional sources of national cohesion—a common culture and language, organization of a coherent national economy, administrative effectiveness, and the ability to provide security—are under challenge. As a result, according to Robert D. Kaplan, "the classificatory grid of nation-states is going to be replaced by a jagged-glass pattern of city-states, shanty-states, nebulous and anarchic regionalisms..."<sup>56</sup> A common model may be medieval Europe, pre-Tokugawa Japan, or modern Lebanon where central governments control a few regions and, perhaps, the capital, but most day-to-day power is diffused. In the future Third World, weak central governments will coexist with the personal fiefdoms of charismatic leaders or warlords, or with autonomous regions defined by ethnicity, tribalism, race, or religion. Each of these small units will probably have its own security force. And like medieval Europe, the Third World will also see the rise of a number of independent "micro-states," often autonomous cities with no ties to a larger political unit or with allegiance to a loose grouping such as the Hanseatic League.

Economic trends are almost as dire. A handful of states in Asia and Latin America have experienced dramatic economic growth spurred primarily by export of manufactured products. For most Third World nations, however, rapidly growing populations, shortages of capital and human resources, inadequate and often decaying infrastructure, instability, corruption, and misguided government policies will prevent sustained economic development. Producers of primary products, whether agricultural or mineral, have undergone decades of relative economic decline in comparison to manufacturing or service economies. There is no reason to expect this to change. As the developed world continues the



shift from manufacturing to information-based economies, there will be opportunities for Third World states to serve as manufacturing centers, but only a few will be able to take advantage of this.

Third World states are also increasingly incapable of assuring the basic health needs of their citizens. In many parts of the Third World, AIDS will contribute to ungovernability by delegitimizing the government and by killing many of the educated leaders and administrators.<sup>57</sup> The same is true of Third World governments' inability to manage their ecologies. In fact, one of the most ominous trends throughout the Third World is serious degradation of the environment. From a combination of population pressure, destructive methods of economic development, rapid urbanization, and decaying infrastructure, most Third World nations suffer dire and worsening ecological problems. They range from deforestation leading to soil erosion, climate change, water pollution, and famine to more "modern" forms of decay such as severe air or noise pollution. All contribute to ungovernability and prevent sustained economic development. While attention to ecological issues is increasing among Third World elites, many still see environmentalism and economic growth as alternative choices rather than complementary objectives. "They have no realization of their own vulnerability," according to Crispin Tickell, "and want only to imitate the industrial world."<sup>58</sup>

Because ecological decay can cause conflict, an increasing trend is to redefine the concept of national security to include environmental issues.<sup>59</sup> According to Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, the principal social effects of environmental degradation are decreased agricultural production, economic decline, population displacement, and disrupted institutions and social relations.<sup>60</sup> From these, three types of conflicts can emerge: simple scarcity conflicts as people compete for river water, fish, and productive land; group identity conflicts arising when people of one group migrate away from their traditional homelands and are seen as a threat by groups in the areas they move to; and, relative deprivation conflicts when ecological decay heightens poverty.<sup>61</sup> Ecological decay can also lead to interstate conflict, particularly over control of

shared fresh water sources such as the Euphrates, Jordan and La Plata rivers.<sup>62</sup>

One of the most important social trends in the Third World is the search for frameworks of personal meaning, order, and value to replace those destroyed by modernization. Modernization brought mass movement from rural areas and villages where daily life was structured by traditional frameworks of meaning, order, and value to cities where traditional frameworks were weak or inapplicable. Building alternative frameworks has been a crucial and often unsolved challenge for Third World leaders. Usually, they approached this in one of three ways. One was to import Western social, political, and economic models. This was especially prevalent in former colonies. A second approach was to adopt an alternative ideology, often Marxism-Leninism or one of its variants. This offered a substitute for traditional systems of order and meaning which seemed, to Third World radicals, more attractive than Western democracy and capitalism. The third approach synthesized the old and the new, took some elements of Westernism, sometimes added a smattering of socialism, and blended them with components of the traditional framework. Such a synthesis occurred throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, in some Islamic countries such as Turkey, and in Asian states like Japan and Korea. It was often paired with a program of supranational identity such as Pan-Africanism, Pan-Arabism, or the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Iranian revolution showed that none of these approaches was fully satisfactory. Islamic extremism there, according to Robert Kaplan, was "the psychological defense mechanism of many urbanized peasants threatened with the loss of traditions in pseudo-modern cities where their values [were] under attack."<sup>63</sup> Around the globe, modernizing Third World elites had been too quick to jettison traditional systems of personal meaning whether religious, ethnic, or tribal. They underestimated the power and persistence of tradition. By the 1990s, the attempt to find personal meaning, values, and order in traditional frameworks had spread throughout the Third World. This appeared in two interlinked forms. The first was religious fundamentalism, whether Islamic, Hindu, or some

other. The second was what can be called "primalism" where politics is defined by subnational identities such as ethnicity or tribalism.

While primalism has long shaped the politics of Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and parts of the Middle East, by the 1980s it proved very much alive in Eastern Europe, on the periphery of the former Soviet Union, and even in the parts of Latin America with substantial Amerindian populations (Peru, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Mexico). Former colonies, in particular, are susceptible to fragmentation from primalism. To more easily rule their colonies, the European powers deliberately emphasized primal identities in order to divide and conquer. For a while, the decolonization struggle and, to a lesser extent, the cold war, helped preserve the fragile unity of heterogenous Third World nations. Perhaps the starkest modern example of primal conflict arising from a form of decolonization is in South Africa. To help preserve apartheid, the white government there encouraged tribal and ethnic division. Today, of course, this not only shapes the political competition, but has also spawned conflict bordering on war.

Today, states without the sort of religious unity that exists in North Africa and the Middle East or, to a lesser degree in Latin America, have seen politics splinter along primal lines rather than political ones. Robert Kaplan argues that as nation-states disintegrate, religion can provide an alternative framework of order.<sup>64</sup> But, as Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq, and some of the Central Asian states of the former Soviet Union show, Islam does not prevent primal conflict. In fact, many states of the Middle East and North Africa are seeing a resurgence of primalism. Algeria, where minority Berber tribesmen are forming self-defense forces, is an example.<sup>65</sup> Even Turkey remains unable to quash a persistent Kurdish uprising in its mountainous southeast.<sup>66</sup>

August Richard Norton has argued that one of the major problems for Third World nations in the 1990s will be their difficulty meeting the "psychopolitical" and cultural needs of their citizens. Fundamentalism and primalism both illustrate the fragility and artificiality of Third World states. Both show the failure of a decades-long attempt to create a framework of

meaning based on national identity. There is no reason to believe that the search for alternatives through fundamentalism and primalism will not intensify, further erode the legitimacy of national regimes, contribute to political fragmentation, and, in many cases, lead to ungovernability.

What, then, do these trends mean for Third World security? Three types of security challenges will dominate the Third World during the coming decades:

- low-level conflict ranging from widespread crime to a form of semipolitical organized crime called "gray area phenomenon";
- internal war against or between primal militias and fundamentalist insurgencies, or violence against groups forced to migrate by ecological decay and economic stagnation; and,
- interstate war instigated by what Anthony Lake calls "backlash states" with large conventional militaries and, increasingly, weapons of mass destruction.<sup>67</sup>

Often a single conflict will mix two or even three of these challenges.

A monopoly of organized coercive powers was one of the factors that historically contributed to the rise and consolidation of the nation-state. Central governments became strong in England, France and elsewhere because they could militarily defeat internal challengers. The state then attained legitimacy because it could protect people most of the time. In today's Third World, that is becoming increasingly rare. A range of groups from criminal cartels to ethnic militias can resist the state's military. This is not simply a doomsday scenario for the distant future, but today's reality. In much of the Third World, governments cannot provide basic, day-to-day security. Walls topped by concertina wire and backed by elaborate alarm systems are standard on even middle-class homes. In poorer neighborhoods, even dirt-floored, single-room houses have thick bars on the windows. More and more businesses have their own armed guards. Of course, this also describes conditions in parts of many American cities, but in the Third

World it is the norm rather than an aberration. Defense and security are becoming essentially local concepts rather than international ones.<sup>68</sup> Police are overwhelmed, and even militaries are unable to provide basic community security.

The implications are profound. As Martin van Creveld contends:

The most important single demand that any political community must meet is the demand for protection. A community which cannot safeguard the lives of its members, subjects, citizens, comrades, brothers, or whatever they are called is unlikely either to command their loyalty or to survive for very long.<sup>69</sup>

As states prove unable to offer basic daily protection to their citizens, those citizens will increasingly see the state as irrelevant and shift loyalties to some sort of subnational defense organization that can provide basic protection. For a while, most Third World nation-states will retain conventional militaries to diligently watch for foreign invaders that never come. Eventually, these armies will decay and disband.

What Peter Lupsha calls "gray area phenomena" also provide a difficult challenge for conventionally-configured security forces.<sup>70</sup> These are threats to security that fall somewhere between traditional, political-military challenges and large-scale organized crime. They include traditional revolutionary insurgencies that use organized crime to fund their cause as well as traditional criminal organizations with large, well-equipped armed forces.<sup>71</sup> Most modern Third World military forces are not intellectually or doctrinally equipped to deal with gray area challenges and the associated corruption. Police forces face similar problems from corruption and, in addition, are often outgunned. From a historical perspective, gray area threats are not an entirely new security problem. Throughout history, bandits and pirates have posed threats and, if unchecked by military forces, eroded the legitimacy of governments. What is happening today is a return to this tradition as military history proves cyclical rather than linear.

Primalism, although originating in political struggle, increasingly sparks security problems. This is not entirely new: primal violence existed throughout the cold war. There were

unadulterated primal conflicts in Sri Lanka, Philippines, Burma, India, Zimbabwe, Algeria, Iraq, and Nigeria. At the same time, many ideological conflicts had powerful primal dimensions. Examples include insurgencies in Oman, Angola, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Guatemala, and Peru. The end of the cold war simply accelerated the process of turning primal differences into armed conflict. In part, this is due to the weakening of the coercive and control mechanisms of Third World states. Neither Russia nor the United States is interested in supporting expensive clients attempting to hold together unviable states. Moscow and Washington are only marginally more interested in the expensive process of cleaning up the residue of their conflict among former friends no longer interested in superpower guidance. In the "end-of-century world," as John Keegan observed, "the rich states that imposed remilitarization from above have made peace their watchword and the poor states that suffered remilitarization from below spurn or traduce the gift..."<sup>72</sup> At a more practical level, the end of the cold war also left the Third World awash in arms, allowing many ethnic, religious, or tribal organizations to field militias or insurgencies. The incentives for primal war have long obtained; now the external constraints are removed and the physical means to pursue such a course are available.

Other factors unrelated to the cold war ease the transformation of political primalism into violence. For example, the distribution of wealth and power in many Third World nations reflects clan, family, ethnic, tribal, or religious lines. This makes primal conflict more than simply a cultural struggle, but a winner-take-all competition for fundamental power and group survival. Primal conflict often has international dimensions as states support primal violence to weaken or punish neighbors. This has long occurred in the Kurdish regions of Iran and Iraq, Kashmir, Ethiopia, Angola, and elsewhere. Sub-Saharan African states, in particular, are likely to support insurgents from neighboring nations or, at least, to make minimal efforts to control them.<sup>73</sup> Today the same thing is occurring in the periphery of the former Soviet bloc. During the cold war, most nations at least officially opposed secessionism. As primalism becomes more important in defining the security environment of most regions, the

opprobrium surrounding secessionism has declined, thus creating the potential for the internationalization of ethnic conflict.<sup>74</sup>

Often primalism and crime combine to stoke anarchy or ungovernability. In many ways, South Africa may be an unfortunate model of the future. That nation is torn by primal violence often pitting Zulus against Xhosas, but also Zulus against Zulus in a struggle between the African National Congress and Inkatha Freedom Party, and, of course, whites against blacks. More than 10,000 South Africans have died in primal violence since 1985. At the local level, the result is gangsterism and anarchy. Examining eastern South Africa, Bill Berkeley writes,

Natal's warlords have been compared to fourteenth-century Italian signori and twentieth-century Chinese and Lebanese warlords, Colombian drug lords, and Mafia racketeers. Like all of these, Natal's warlords control fiefdoms through a mixture of terror and patronage. In their own fiefs they can tax and recruit, run protection rackets, hire hit men, and finance private militias by extorting tribute from their subjects.<sup>75</sup>

In areas where private warlords do not control security, other non-state organizations do. Both the African National Congress and Inkatha Freedom Party have established military training camps in Natal.<sup>76</sup> "Anarchy," according to Berkeley, "is compelling many people to seek allegiance with political parties for refuge, vengeance, or both...Political parties have become justice organizations for millions of people because there is a big vacuum that the police are either unable or unwilling to fill."<sup>77</sup>

The third security problem faced by Third World nations is traditional inter-state aggression. Particularly dangerous are the handful of decaying backlash states with major conventional armed forces which either have or will acquire weapons of mass destruction. Obviously, the danger from proliferation varies according to the possessor.<sup>78</sup> States without territorial ambitions pose less danger than unstable personalistic dictatorships such as Qaddafi's Libya, Hussein's Iraq, or Kim's North Korea with regional or territorial ambitions.

As such regimes recognize that they cannot sustain their conventional forces without Soviet patronage and conclude from the Gulf War that such forces offer little security against the advanced nations anyway, they actively seek weapons of mass destruction. Despite U.S. efforts, they will eventually obtain them.<sup>79</sup> Coupled with the proliferation of delivery systems such as ballistic missiles, these backlash states, which are externally aggressive in large part because of their internal insecurity, will threaten their neighbors.<sup>80</sup> Eventually they too will fragment or sink into ungovernability; this process will pose extreme dangers.

The face of Third World security is also changing at a systemic level. On one hand, the Third World is enlarging as parts of the former Soviet bloc join. At the same time, the Third World is splitting into two distinct parts. The future international system, then, will be divided into three tiers.<sup>81</sup> The defining feature will be governability. The first tier consists of governable states, most in North America, Western Europe, or the Asia Pacific region. While some of them may have small internal pockets of un- or semigovernability, they will generally be stable. This tier will be dominated by information-driven economic and cultural integration—these states will represent what the Tofflers call the "third wave."<sup>82</sup> Because of a whole range of political, economic, and social developments, there is little chance of sustained major war among the states of the first tier.<sup>83</sup> Their primary security concern will be keeping instability from the Third World away from their borders at a manageable cost.

The second tier will include "cusp" states which fluctuate between governability and crisis, or which have distinct and persistent internal pockets of ungovernability. Some of these will be states physically located on the boundaries of the traditional Third World such as Mexico, Israel, and Turkey. Some will be large states such as China, India, Brazil, and Russia combining advanced and backward regions. This unevenness will even extend to the cities and megalopolises of these countries where sections of stability and lively economic activity will coexist with ungovernable slums. As in Mexico's recent "Zapatista" uprising, most security problems



for these nations will arise from the tension between backward and advanced regions. In some cases, the two will politically split. Second tier economies will continue to mix information-intensive advanced sectors with traditional industry and, in the backward regions, profound underdevelopment. The second tier will also include states "special" for some reason of geography, especially possession of petroleum. Eventually, though, petroleum will lose its central role in the world economy, and petroleum producers will be divided into those with small populations which can retain governability by living off of investments made during the boom years, and larger ones susceptible to ungovernability.

Occasionally, a well-governed second tier state will make the transition to the first tier using information-based economics. After all, one defining feature of modern age is diffusion of information. A networked personal computer is the key to economic activity, and there is no reason to believe that the developed nations of Europe, Northeast Asia, and North America will retain a permanent monopoly on vital information and information technology. Relatively small second tier states will find this transition easier. In fact, some cities may secede from the poorer parts of their nations to emulate the success of Hong Kong or Singapore. As they try to move into the first tier, a key problem for second tier states will be keeping talent at home. Success will come to those that rely on incentives. States that attempt disincentives, whether legal or appeals to nationalism, will often fail.

The third tier of the world system will consist of the ungovernables. Most will have small pockets of stability where the rich cluster and are defended by private security forces or where some sort of local authoritarianism preserves order through the use of militias, but fragmentation and instability will be the norm. Occasionally, authoritarian regimes able to impose some degree of stability throughout a country will arise, but most of these will be short-lived. Regions with an organic substitute system of order such as Islam will tend to be more stable than regions where primalism forms the only alternative to nationalism.<sup>64</sup> Because of pervasive poverty, ecological decay will be particularly dire in the third tier. A few national

governments will forestall fragmentation for a while, but in most third tier states, power and authority will disperse, with primal or personalistic militias ranging from sophisticated miniatures of conventional combined-arms forces to untrained bands of thugs forming the dominant type of military organization.

### **A Strategy for the Future.**

What, then, should a U.S. strategy for the Third World which reflects current trends look like? For starters, a strategy for the future must retain elements of both idealism and realism. In the "CNN era," idealism is necessary to sustain domestic support. Because realism, with its cold amorality, has little appeal to the mass public it often takes idealism—a sense of promoting *good—to mobilize public support for overseas engagement. According to Morton H. Halperin, "if Americans saw that U.S. policymakers were promoting democracy around the globe, they would be more likely to support American policy with financial commitments and military action when necessary to accomplish those foreign policy goals."*<sup>65</sup> Thus any future strategy which does not make the United States a force for good will be unsustainable. And this is not simply a matter of public relations or image manipulation: there is a definite moral imperative in U.S. foreign and national security strategy. We are a nation defined by shared unifying political and economic values such as representative democracy, due process of law, and free enterprise rather than ethnicity, race, religion, history, or even language. Because we are multicultural, these political and economic values must be considered universal. If our values are not appropriate for the Third World, their applicability to Asian-Americans, African-Americans, or any of our other subcultures can be questioned. We thus paint a seamless relationship between the values by which we organize our own society and the values that shape our foreign and national security policy.

The idealistic component of our future strategy must, however, be modest in expectations. As Third World nations become ungovernable and democratic regimes prove unable to cope with ecological decay, population growth, economic stagnation, and new security challenges, many will turn to

authoritarianism and charisma-based extremism. Given this, the major idealistic component of a future American strategy should support cheap, low-casualty, multilateral humanitarian relief, and opposition to genocide rather than promotion of democracy. American intervention in Somalia, despite confused objectives and a poor job of mobilizing public support, is something of a model for the future. In terms of its humanitarian goals, the operation was a success. Famine was averted. In the future, we will be called on to do this again. Hopefully, in those instances we can save lives without any illusions of rebuilding societies. Of course this leaves us open to the charge that humanitarian relief without social and political reconstruction is a stop-gap action that must often be repeated when fragile peace collapses. This is true, but unavoidable: the imposed reconstruction of failed states in the third tier is not worth the costs and risks. Prevention of genocide may be the exception. This must, however, be multilateral. As morally painful as it is, the United States must resist the urge to intervene unilaterally to stop primal conflict when a multilateral coalition cannot be formed.

The future strategy should promote human rights in nondemocracies, again with modest expectations. Traditional idealism considered human rights and democracy inextricable. It is true that democracies are usually the best and most consistent protectors of human rights. But given the tendencies toward ungovernability and even anarchy in the Third World, authoritarianism will be common. In many regions, the best we can hope for will be more-or-less benevolent dictators. Economic power applied collectively should be our major tool. We must continue to treat backsliders such as Peru's Fujimori who act undemocratically with popular support different than unabashedly corrupt and repressive regimes like the ruling cabal in Haiti. Phrased differently, protection of human rights rather than techniques for selecting political elites must be the benchmark used to determine a regime's relationship with the United States.

The strategy of the future also needs a healthy dose of realism. We must protect existing tangible interests in the Third World even as we seek to diminish them. Currently, no other

natural resource generates nearly the same degree of strategic risk and dependency as petroleum so nothing could more unencumber our national security strategy than lessening our overall dependence on petroleum. Development of alternative fuels, then, is a national security priority. Potentially, fresh water may become equally significant. If so, our strategy must be adapted to accommodate this. The possibility of military intervention to protect access to any other nonpetroleum strategic resource is small, but we must intelligently manage the strategic stockpile, encourage domestic mining, and assure multiple source of key minerals.<sup>86</sup>

The primary tangible interest driving U.S. strategy in the future should be ecological sanity. This should be a centerpiece, a determining criterion of the extent and form of our engagement in a Third World country. The interface of ecological issues and security is of paramount importance, but because it is at the cutting edge of strategy, there are no precedents or historical lessons. As a result, the raw materials of strategy—imperatives, principles, techniques, and procedures—must be invented. Even though there is no clear consensus either within the United States or in the world community on the appropriate response to ecological security issues, it is possible to make several contentions about future strategy. For example, the ecological dimension of our security strategy demands close cooperation among the U.S. military, other government agencies, other nations, and nongovernmental groups.

Actions to support ecological security will range from preemptive, conflict-avoiding peacetime engagement to outright intervention. Preemptive actions in cooperation with host governments are relatively easy. Intervention is not. In the future, there will be cases where ecological insanity poses a direct threat to neighboring states, thus aiding the formation of support for intervention both within the United States and among other nations. More difficult are cases of *indirect* security problems arising from ecological mismanagement (e.g. migration), strictly *internal* problems, and, most amorphous of all, *incipient* ecological insanity. Existing global norms simply do not account for these. The United States

should lead the campaign to construct such norms. On a more immediate level, the United States must develop techniques for low-tech responses to ecological problems that can be sustained by host nations with only moderate U.S. assistance. Priorities should be fuels to replace firewood and charcoal, economically viable reforestation programs, and methods for cleaning water supplies poisoned from sewage and industrial pollution. As we frame policy, ecological assistance should be considered in the same terms as any other component of security and developmental assistance.

Ecological issues should not be the only form of realism in the future American strategy toward the Third World. We should be concerned with regional balances, but if we are able to diminish our dependence on imported petroleum, few if any of these will warrant U.S. military intervention. Instead we should serve, to use Alberto Coll's phrase, as the "grand facilitator" providing good offices and using economic and political power to preserve balances.<sup>87</sup> We should avoid the tendency to overmanage regional balances. For backlash states such as Iraq, Libya, and North Korea, we should always consider political, economic, and perhaps even military support of dissidents, preferably in conjunction with regional allies. This is admittedly very risky and runs the possibility of creating new failed states, more Bosnias and Somalias, or of provoking a dying dictatorship to lash out at its neighbors or launch a terrorist campaign against the United States.

Proliferation will complicate and flavor all such decisions. As Michèle A. Flournoy argues, "nuclear proliferation will compel the United States to distinguish anew those interests worth the risk of nuclear confrontation from those that are not."<sup>88</sup> We must learn to live with this. Our traditional nonproliferation strategy is bankrupt. As a replacement, we must mobilize American and global public support for a new form of deterrence that explicitly states that any use of weapons of mass destruction is a crime against humanity to be punished by overwhelming military force (albeit conventional, stand-off weaponry).<sup>89</sup> This will have definite limits. There is at least the possibility that small groups or even individuals bent on punishing their enemies at any cost may

acquire weapons of mass destruction.<sup>90</sup> These will not be deterrable.<sup>91</sup> In most cases, though, states will retain a monopoly over the capability to effectively deliver weapons of mass destruction, and these can be deterred. There is also the possibility that a conventional war involving one or more nuclear-armed states might require multilateral intervention before it reaches the point of desperation. Even preemption might be necessary in the case of nuclear-armed "crazy states."<sup>92</sup>

In the future, the United States must be less engaged in the Third World, especially in ungovernable third tier regions. The problems there are simply beyond our ability to cure at a reasonable cost. As advocated by many 19th century American statesmen, we should serve as a model, offer advice when asked, but resist the interventionist urge. And the danger from extensive involvement in Third World conflict goes beyond simple frustration and expense. It can challenge, even erode our core values. If engaged in primal conflict, the United States would have two options. One would be to retain our own standards and refuse to adopt the repulsive features of primal conflict such as the killing of civilians. As in Vietnam, this would mean accepting a strategic loss to preserve core national values. The second option would be to "fight fire with fire," to answer those who murder civilians, establish concentration camps, starve enemy populations, and mortar marketplaces with equal force. In World War II where vital interests if not outright national survival were at stake, this was necessary. In the future Third World, it will never be. The long-term cost of fighting fire with fire in a peripheral conflict is, as France discovered in Algeria, erosion of national values and severe internal political conflict.<sup>93</sup>

Primal conflict spawns an endless series of deadly traps for the United States. Because the enemy in such struggles is a *people* rather than a regime or states, nothing they can do, no change of policy or position, can diminish the threat they pose to their enemies. This makes the distinction between combatants and noncombatants meaningless. Yet this very feature of primal conflict creates an image of *evil* likely to provoke indignation, repulsion, and a desire for intervention

among Americans. The evil inherent in primal war makes us want to intervene, but will debilitate us if we do. "Such conflicts," John Keegan writes, "by their nature defy efforts at mediation from outside, since they are fed by passions and rancors that do not yield to rational measure or persuasion or control..."<sup>94</sup> The best American response is thus moral anguish coupled with rejection of the urge to intervene.

Even if the United States does not explicitly choose extensive disengagement from the Third World, it may be forced upon us. There is likely to be a resurgence of anti-Americanism as Third World regimes recognize their declining strategic significance in the post-cold war world. In a game played throughout the Third World, leaders created artificial importance by flirting with one superpower or the other or by giving the impression of imminent danger from the clients of the other superpower. Nations strategically insignificant by most measures thus became important actors on the global stage. Backwater conflicts in Angola, Afghanistan, Nicaragua, and Vietnam became front-page news. After the cold war, historical normalcy will return as small, out-of-the-way nations again become unimportant. A few groups may attempt to use terrorism to gain attention as the Palestinians did. During the late cold war period, Third World anti-Americanism became an important variable in our foreign policy.<sup>95</sup> In a replay of this, the most common reaction to the frustration of insignificance in the post-cold war period will be even more virulent anti-Americanism.

There will be exceptions. Some second tier states attempting the move to first tier status will remain cordial to protect access to American markets, technology, and capital. In the short term, Third World nations who fear conventional aggression from their neighbors such as the Arab Persian Gulf states will also be friendly toward the United States. But without Soviet assistance, backlash states not wealthy enough to equip themselves in the international arms market will eventually lose the ability to attack across borders and will sink into ungovernability. This tendency will accelerate if arms producers, especially China, stop supplying military equipment to unstable Third World friends. Encouraging this should be a

strategic priority. If the first tier can unite in opposition to large-scale weapons exports, new suppliers will arise, but their products will remain second quality, thus posing no direct danger to first tier militaries.

Most Third World nations will face internal challenges from traditional revolutionary insurgency, primal conflict, and gray area phenomena.<sup>96</sup> Since many will reject assistance from the United States, there will probably be a group of second and even third tier states experienced in conflict short of war willing to provide training and assistance (for a price). Possible candidates include Israel, Taiwan, Guatemala, El Salvador, and South Africa. Eventually, conflict short of war will probably be privatized. Nonnational corporations will supply training, advice, and equipment to beleaguered regimes. These may be headquartered in first tier states where they have easy access to information and technology. If such new mercenaries meet with moral and political disapproval in the first tier, they will establish themselves in Third World states willing to tolerate them for the money, security, and technology they bring.

Even as the United States undergoes partial disengagement from third tier regimes, it should at least establish basic ties with the increasingly important sub- and non-state actors. This would require some major changes in our attitudes toward statecraft. Traditionally, we dealt primarily with the government in a foreign country. But as ungovernability spreads, governments in third tier states will be only one among many centers of power, and often not the most important one. Real power will lie with primal militias, charismatic extremists, warlords, drug cartels, and corporations. As difficult and complex as it may be, Americans must deal with the real sources of power in a nation, not symbolic ones.

A future U.S. strategy for the Third World must continue to blend unilateralism and multilateralism. There is some modest utility in strengthening the United Nations, but its flaws and shortcomings are much too serious to make it a primary element of a future American strategy for the Third World. There is currently a struggle between the two personalities of the U.N. It is simultaneously a conglomeration of states and



the representative of collective global consciousness transcending the interests of individual states. In the future, the struggle between the forces of global integration and disintegration will probably shatter the U.N. As Alvin and Heidi Toffler write, "International organizations unable to incorporate, co-opt, enfeeble, or destroy new nonnational sources of power will crumble into irrelevance."<sup>97</sup> For the United States, there will be more long-term value in a more homogenous political organization composed only of first tier states. This may be an outgrowth of NATO, a split-off from the U.N., or some entirely new organization.

In the mid-term, though, the U.N.'s major function should be to serve as the facilitator for the resolution of conflict in third tier regions where U.S. concerns are minimal. The notion of multilateral efforts at humanitarian relief or even humanitarian intervention where the United States provides intelligence, transportation, aerospace power, and naval support has great merit. With successful reform, the United Nations could direct these.<sup>98</sup> At the same time, the United States must rigorously avoid any changes to the U.N. system which erode the power of the Security Council or limit our veto. NATO has some potential for containing Third World conflict, but if the Bosnian conflict is an indicator, it will not be able to perform this role and should focus on security in Eastern Europe.

Future American strategy should attempt to improve techniques for the collective application of nonmilitary power such as the political and economic isolation of backlash states and regimes. This is notoriously hard to do, and nearly all past economic sanctions have been leaky. Such problems do not, however, mean that political and economic isolation is worthless. Even the often-breached sanctions against South Africa helped bring that conflict to the point of political resolution. What the United States should do, then, is further hone this tool.

### **Military Implications.**

Over the next 10 years, the chance of major American involvement in sustained land warfare in the Third World will

drop to near zero. There are a number of reasons for this. One is the basic logic of strategy. It pits two or more thinking, adapting antagonists in conflict, each seeking the weakness or vulnerability of the other. In strategy, success breeds obsolescence. The Gulf War demonstrated our superiority at conventional land warfare, so no Third World tyrant with an iota of sense will challenge us that way again. While Schwarzkopf's disdain for Hussein's strategic talent was warranted, there are astute military thinkers in the Third World. We simply cannot base our future strategy on the assumption that our enemy will be stupid.

In addition, the Persian Gulf was unusual in that the United States had clear, tangible national interests which could be used to mobilize domestic support for military intervention. Since tangible U.S. interests in the nonpetroleum producing parts of the Third World are small and declining, there would be tremendous resistance to American involvement in most serious conflicts. It is important to remember the weakness of initial congressional and public support for the armed liberation of Kuwait. Outside the Middle East, Korea is considered the most likely spot for conventional war. This may occur, but, if not, public support for the continued defense of this increasingly wealthy ally will erode.

Potential opponents in the Third World know that Saddam Hussein was right when he concluded that the American public's low tolerance for casualties was our greatest weakness. Most of them would do better than Hussein at assuring that we suffer such casualties if we become involved in their conflicts. Speculating on the possibility of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, Abdul Haq, a *mujahedeen* commander, said, "...if they step in, they will be stuck. We have a British grave in Afghanistan. We have a Soviet grave. And then we will have an American grave."<sup>99</sup>

Beyond simply fanaticism, technology augments the ability of potential Third World enemies to cause American casualties. One aspect of the ongoing revolution in military affairs is dispersion of destructive power and—even more ominously—the ability to apply it. A terrorist or, to use a more politically neutral term, commando correctly armed and backed with solid

intelligence can kill many Americans. Improved force security can only partially ameliorate this. With proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, the political risks of conventional military operations will continue to mount. We will very soon reach a point where none of our relatively limited interests in the Third World justify the risks of conventional military intervention. Furthermore, as nuclear weapons proliferate and states fragment, the likelihood of conventional interstate war in the Third World is itself declining.<sup>100</sup> The few states remaining intact will deter each other, and the multitude of organizations and groups which replace states will make a different form of war.

Since our current military strategy focuses on Third World contingencies, the declining chances of American involvement in land warfare there have profound implications. As Daniel Bolger wrote, "yesterday's solutions, no matter how dramatically executed, rarely address tomorrow's problems."<sup>101</sup> In the future, the most likely opponents the United States will face in the Third World will not be low-grade, Soviet-style conventional armies as in the Gulf War, but gray area organizations, primal militias, the private armies of warlords or corporations, and, for a while, unstable and aggressive nations armed with both conventional military forces and weapons of mass destruction. To meet these threats, the U.S. military must prepare for both offensive and defensive missions.

There will be three primary types of offensive missions. One will be humanitarian and ecological operations ranging from cooperative relief to outright intervention. These will always be interagency and multinational. For preemptive actions in cooperation with host nations, involvement of the U.S. military will be limited and temporary. It would include things such as the provision of transportation, intelligence, and basic infrastructure for use by ecological relief agencies. When ecological insanity poses an international threat, when the host nation is not cooperative, or when nations or subnational groups in ungovernable regions use ecological damage as a deliberate tool of conflict, the U.S. military would play a more important role. The same holds when famine is used as a tool

of war as in Sudan and Somalia. In addition to security for civilian relief agencies, the U.S. military would punish groups using deliberate ecological destruction or humanitarian disaster. In both humanitarian and ecological operations, the U.S. military must improve coordination with nonmilitary agencies and organizations, and must develop better procedures for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence. It must also develop more appropriate equipment and methods for operational planning, force packaging, and training.

A second type of offensive mission will be strikes by small, joint, but unilateral teams to punish enemies or enforce international actions. These may be organized into patterns which constitute a new form of campaign, but seldom will lead to sustained combat. Most often, they will be stand-off strikes using precision conventional weapons. When facing a nuclear-armed opponent, we will choose to avoid escalation to conventional warfare. When the opponent is a militia or gray area organization, the enemy will refuse to be drawn into conventional combat. Outside of Europe, the only potential for traditional sustained combat will come when the opponent is a conventionally-armed nation-state which does not yet possess weapons of mass destruction, or when American policymakers decide that the enemy can be deterred from using his weapons of mass destruction even in the face of conventional defeat. Both situations will be rare.

The third type of offensive mission will be traditional special operations including unconventional warfare, direct action, special reconnaissance, psychological operations, and civil affairs. In general, Special Operations Forces will require less alteration of existing force structure, equipment, and training to be of utility in the future strategy than most other elements of the U.S. military.

The future strategy will also require a cluster of defensive military missions such as immigration control, counterterrorism, force protection during ecological and humanitarian missions, and strategic-level protection against weapons of mass destruction. These will often be performed in conjunction with other nations. Future defensive missions

will require changes in emphasis and doctrine within the U.S. military. They must be seen as primary missions with strategic significance rather than secondary functions designed to support offensive actions. One of the priorities will be better integration of U.S. intelligence assets. This will probably require some reorganization of the intelligence community. The institutional separation of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency, for instance, is a legacy of the cold war with little relevance in the new security environment.

If our national security strategy remains focused on the Third World, the dominant branches of the future U.S. Army are likely to be Special Forces, Military Police, Military Intelligence, Aviation, and Air Defense Artillery. Traditionally equipped armor, infantry, and field artillery may play a role in the security of Europe, but have little utility in the Third World where likely opponents will be unable or unwilling to fight conventional, combined-arms battles. If Europe stabilizes, skill at large-unit combined-arms warfare will become less vital for the United States. Proficiency in this area may come to rest more on nostalgia than strategic necessity since, as John Keegan notes, it is common for "exclusive military minorities" such as the Egyptian Mamelukes, Renaissance European armored knights, Japanese samurai, and post-World War I European horse cavalry to "cling to antique skills-at-arms."<sup>102</sup> The U.S. military will still need to retain its technological edge to operate effectively in Third World conflict short of war, but this will require radical changes in force structure and doctrine.<sup>103</sup>

Military Intelligence, Military Police, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations forces will be especially important for those rare cases where national policy calls for the *direct* application of force in the Third World. Direct applications, where the U.S. military actually creates and sustains stability, were traditional for the Army in the frontier days. The 20th century norm, however, has been a Clausewitzian *indirect* application of force where the military—whether conventional infantry, armor, and field artillery or Special Forces—was used to influence the elites and decisionmakers of the enemy who,

in turn, controlled their populace. In the absence of meaningful authority in the future Third World, the U.S. military may have to revert to the direct role. After all, there is no use controlling the decisions and perceptions of powerless leaders. This shift will require a substantial refocus of doctrine, training, and leader development from the current concentration on the indirect application of force. Phrased differently, if the United States opts for engagement in the Third World, the U.S. Army must look beyond the brilliant success of the Gulf War to its distant past to relearn methods for creating political order out of chaos.

### **Conclusions.**

For the next decade, the Third World is likely to undergo a phased transition. Initially nation-states will still remain the most important political units and backlash states with large conventional militaries will pose the greatest danger. As a result, the conventionally-configured U.S. military will retain utility and, if a frightened tyrant miscalculates, a variant of the Gulf War may ensue. Eventually, though, the Third World will enter a new phase. The third tier will disintegrate into ungovernability while nation-states and conventional militaries decline in significance and, eventually, pass from the scene entirely. Hopefully, the United States will have undergone substantial strategic disengagement by this point. When humanitarian and ecological relief is necessary, we can only be effective if we have undertaken a radical restructuring of our security forces. This includes not only reorganization and changed emphasis within the military, but also alterations of the fundamental relationship of the U.S. military and the nonmilitary elements of our security and intelligence forces. To approach the security challenges of the future with the ideas and organizations of the past will condemn us to ineffectiveness.

These conclusions, of course, reflect a specific image of the Third World's future. There is at least the possibility that current trends will change, that democracy and ecologically-sustainable economic development will win out, that fragmentation can be resisted, that viable alternative systems

of personal meaning can be constructed, and that cooperation rather than conflict will dominate. The key to a positive future in the Third World would be the rise and rapid spread of an alternative value framework and politico-economic system stressing population control, ecological sanity, intergroup cooperation, and deference to authority. Because of the extent of change needed and the speed with which it must take place, such a new system would probably have to take the form of a unifying religion, either a totally new one or a mutation from an existing one. Only a religion can generate the transformative power needed to change the course of the Third World's future.

Given the American mindset, though, we tend to expect either technology or U.S. activism to solve the profound problems of the Third World. Both are chimeras. Americans should wish for a rosy future, but not plan on it. Danger and chaos in the Third World are more likely. But if some rosy future does come to fruition, American strategy must still undergo radical transformation. Our objectives, the form and extent of our engagement, and the requisite military force will be different, but the extent of change the same. Whatever future scenario is used to reform U.S. strategy in the Third World, the need for strategic entrepreneurship remains.

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79. On proliferation trends, see Lewis A. Dunn, "New Nuclear Threats to U.S. Security," in Robert D. Blackwill and Albert Carnesale, eds., *New Nuclear Nations: Consequences for U.S. Policy*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993.

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81. Although his analytical schema divides the world into two rather than three parts, I am indebted to Don Snow for the notion of a world system based on "tiers." A similar notion splits the world into a "zone of peace" and "zone of turmoil." See *The US Army Roundtable on the Revolution in Military Affairs*, a report prepared by the Strategic Assessment Center, Science Applications International Corporation, September 1993. My schema is closer to that of Alvin and Heidi Toffler who divide the world into an electronic-based tier, an industrial one, and an agrarian one. See *War and Anti-War: Survival at the Dawn of the 21st Century*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1993.

82. Alvin Toffler and Heidi Toffler, *The Third Wave*, New York: Bantam, 1980.

83. See the comments of Don Snow and other roundtable participants in Metz, *The Future of the United Nations*, pp. 6-10. Other analysts agree that war may not originate among the developed nations, but see the possibility of war beginning in the Third World and then engulfing the developed world. See Alvin and Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti-War*, pp. 204-205.

84. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," pp. 60-70.

85. Halperin, "Guaranteeing Democracy," 106.

86. See Kent Hughes Butts, *Strategic Minerals in the New World Order*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 1993.

87. Alberto R. Coll, "America as the Grand Facilitator," *Foreign Policy*, No. 87, Summer 1992, pp. 47-66.

88. Michèle A. Flournoy, "Implications for U.S. Military Strategy," in Blackwill and Camesale, eds., *New Nuclear Nations*, p. 135.

89. See Seth Cropsey, "The Only Credible Deterrent," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 2, March/April 1994, pp. 14-21.

90. Tofflers, *War and Anti-War*, pp. 197-198.

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95. See Alvin Z. Rubinstein and Donald E. Smith, eds., *Anti-Americanism in the Third World: Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy*, New York: Praeger, 1985.

96. On likely patterns of insurgency, see Steven Metz, *The Future of Insurgency*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 1993.

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98. For analysis, see Sarah Sewall, "Peace Enforcement and the United Nations," in Dennis J. Quinn, ed., *Peace Support Operations and the U.S. Military*, Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1994; and Edward Marks and William Lewis, *Triage for Failing States*, Washington, DC: National Defense University Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1994.

99. Quoted in Weiner, "Blowback From the Afghan Battlefield," p. 53.

100. Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, p. 194.

101. Daniel P. Bolger, "The Ghosts of Omdurman," *Parameters*, Vol. 21, No. 3, Autumn 1991, p. 31.

102. Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, p. 225.

103. See Steven Metz and James Kievit, *The Revolution in Military Affairs and Conflict Short of War*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, forthcoming 1994.



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